

Our Bible School

PRAYER MEETING TOPICS

J. L. GILLIN

CHARACTER STUDIES—JOSEPH. NO. 2

I. Biography.

- a. Cast into prison. Gen. 39:20.
- b. God gives him favor with the keeper. Gen. 39:21-25.
- c. Skillful in interpreting dreams. (1) For the butler and baker. Gen. 40:20-23. (2) Pharaoh. Gen. 41:1, 18, 14, 16, 25, 26.
- d. Joseph exalted by Pharaoh. Gen. 41:40.
- e. Gather corn against the famine. Gen. 41:49.
- f. Jacob sends to Egypt for food. Gen. 42:1, 2.
- g. Joseph's craftiness. Gen. 42:19-20; 44:12-17.
- h. Reveals himself to his brethren. Gen. 45:1-9.
- i. His sons blessed by Jacob. Gen. 48:15, 19. Gen. 49:22-26.

II. Life Lessons.

- a. Sometimes good people suffer, but when they must it is for a purpose.
- b. The Christians are the salt of the earth.
- c. Joseph was not scared because he knew God was with him.
- d. He returned good to his brothers for the evil they had done him.

STUDIES IN JOEL

Number 5

In the concluding study in Joel I shall briefly present the

THEOLOGY OF THE BOOK

1. *The Inspiration and Authority.*—The title declares this prophecy to be "The word of the Lord." The prophet is represented as speaking for the Lord as in 1:6; 2:1. Jehovah speaks directly by the mouth of the prophet in 2:12; the section beginning with 2:18 and in parts of chapter 3.
2. *Repentance.* The prophet has a vigorous and keen appreciation of the people's duty to turn unto God. In 1:13-14 he calls upon the whole population to pray and cry unto God. In 2:12-14 an earnest call goes forth to sincere and sorrowful repentance, by which, perchance, the Lord may "turn" and "leave a blessing." In 2:32 deliverance from judgment is promised upon a personal confession of the Lord.
3. *The House of the Lord.*—From the days of the tabernacle the worship of the Lord was to the devout Israelite the strongest bond between himself and his God. To interrupt this worship, especially that of a sacrificial nature, was to strike at his very life. In 1:9-10 the prophet bewails the cutting off of the meal and drink offerings. Cf. 1:13-16 and 2:14-17. These references show the place held by the temple service in the Theocracy. In restored Judah

the temple shall be a source of great blessing. 3:18

4. *Israel.*—The prophet speaks of the land occupied by Israel as the Lord's, 1:6-7; the temple-mount is his, 2:1; the inhabitants of the land are his people, 2:18; the children of Zion rejoice in the Lord their God, 2:23; and praise him, 2:26; the faithful remnant are his called ones, 2:32; the carried away captives God has not forgotten them, 3:1; Judah shall yet be restored and so be recompensed, 3:6, 8, 16, 20. Israel is God's covenant people and as such they enjoy the theocratic privilege.

5. *Priests.*—Joel recognizes the prominence that is given to the priests in the religious services of the people. In 1:9 and 2:17 they are called the Lord's ministers; and in 1:13 they are called ministers of the altar—the ones who offer the sacrifices, and ministers of God.

6. *The outpouring of the Spirit.*—One of the most remarkable O. T. passages is Joel 2:28-32. It has a gospel ring to it. Peter quotes it in his Pentecost sermon and declares the manifestation to be of the order of things foretold by Joel. The reference is clearly to the HOLY SPIRIT, thro whom the the divine illumination once shared only by the prophets is afterward to be enjoyed by all upon such conditions as the Lord determines. Cf. Num. 11:29. In the gospel we see Joel's words finding fulfillment in a measure. In the church it is the privilege of every member to rise into a fellowship and a life immediately united with God. Read John 14:13-24. And study the personal relation of the Holy Spirit to the Christian as taught in the N. T. "Afterwards" we shall see Joel's vision realized.

7. *The day of the Lord.*—This expression occurs in 1:15, 2:1, 2:11, and 3:14.

The doctrine of the "day of the Lord" as a day of judgment is taught by prophets from Joel on. See Amos 5:18; Isa. 2:12; 13:6; 24:21; Jer. 46:10; Ezek. 7:7; 30:3; Zeph. 1:7; Zech. 14:1; Mal. 3:2 and 4:1. The great prominence given this doctrine is emphasized by the fact that it enters largely into the pseudepigraphic literature: Enoch. 45:2; Ps. of Sol. 15; 13; 4 Ezra 6:18, etc.; and Apoc. of Baruch 51:1; 51:6, etc. The doctrine finds its true setting and enlargement in the New Testament. Cf. Matt. 12:36; Acts 17:31; Rom. 2:5; Heb. 9:27; 2 Peter 2:9, and many others.

8. *God.*—The idea of God in this book is very exalted. His Revelation as seen in natural phenomena and His Providence as exercised over His people is clearly of a high order in the prophet's conception. He is call Lord, Heb. Jehovah (or Jahveh,) a name that emphasizes the Eternity and Immutability of God; hence His covenant name, 1:1, 9, etc.; He is the Almighty, the Majestic One, in 1:16; To Him men cry in prayer, 1:19, etc.; in 2:11 the Lord is represented as commanding all natural phenomena,—God's hand is recognized in the history of nations; in 2:18, He is

represented as intensely interested in his land, i. e., his people; God is gracious, 2:13; full of compassion and merciful, patient and forgiving, 2:13; He bestows blessing, 2:14; He pities his people and answers their prayer, 2:18, 19; in all his dealings with his people he does wondrously so they never need be ashamed for he more than fulfils his promises, 2:26, 27; He gives the Spirit without measure, 2:28; calls his people, 2:32; delivers from captivity, 3:1; recompenses the evildoer, 3:4; sits as judge of the nations, 3:12; He is the refuge of his people, 3:16; dwells in Zion, 3:17, 21.

REMARKS

1. Note all the references carefully and enlarge each doctrine hinted at in these notes. Use your note-book and concordance.

2. Read *Obadiah*—this book will be our next study.

Fraternally,

J. ALLEN MILLER.

Hiram, O.

"BEHOLD HE PRAYETH"—Acts 19:11

H. R. HOLSINGER

The evidences of the gospel and its great acceptability with the common people may be justly attributed to its plain dealing with facts, and in all things its reasonableness. It teaches the highest state of refinement, is ennobling in all its tendencies, and reaches down to humanity in its degradation, that it may lift him up.

The person referred to in the text had been a persecutor of the people of God. He had asked for and obtained authority to bind all who might be found of that religion, both men and women; yes even the women. Certainly the women had an equal right to suffer with the men, but it was not very gallant in Saul to persecute them, to say the least. He was zealous in his persecutions because he thought he was doing God service. But he was told of his error, and immediately he inquired what then he should do? He was told what he must do; but having heard of the previous bad character of this man Saul of Tarsus, and lest he might hesitate or fear, and as a guarantee of his sincerity, Ananias was told,

"BEHOLD HE PRAYETH"

How very natural is all this. There was really some good reason here for doubts and fears. That a person who had been zealous in persecuting the Christians one day, should in three days thereafter be seeking to be admitted among their number, was something out of the usual order of things. Ananias replied: "Lord, I have heard by many of this man, how much evil he hath done to thy saints at Jerusalem: and here he hath authority from the chief priests to bind all who call on thy name." But to allay all his fears the Lord in a vision said unto Ananias; "Arise and go inquire for one called Saul for